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CIRM RECEIVES IOM REPORT ON RISKS TO EGG DONORS

Institute of Medicine Panel Identifies Need for Additional Research

SAN FRANCISCO, February 6, 2007 – The California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) today received a report from the National Academies' Institute of Medicine (IOM) and National Research Council (NRC) on the medical and psychological risks to women who donate oocytes (human eggs) for research.

The report, *Assessing the Medical Risks of Human Oocyte Donation for Stem Cell Research*, follows a scientific workshop convened by the IOM in San Francisco on September 28, 2006. It was commissioned by CIRM to address three principal questions:

- What is known about the risks of egg donation?
- What additional research needs to be undertaken?
- What can be done to minimize the known risks?

"Eggs provided for reproductive or research purposes are likely to remain the principal source for derivation of new human embryonic stem cells, though other sources may be found in the future," said Zach W. Hall, Ph.D., President and Chief Scientific Officer of CIRM. "We are committed to funding stem cell research that is conducted under the highest medical and ethical standards possible. Developing a complete understanding of the potential risks facing women, especially those donating for research purposes, is central to that objective."

"The IOM report deepens our understanding of the risks women face when donating eggs," Hall said. "It is the first time scientists and medical experts have convened to comprehensively review the issues and risks of egg donation. Researchers across the country and internationally will find the IOM report timely and informative."

The workshop and report examined the short- and long-term risks of ovarian stimulation and egg retrieval in women who undergo in vitro fertilization (IVF). Short-term risks include ovarian hyperstimulation syndrome (OHSS); complications and injury from egg retrieval surgery; and psychological risks associated with the screening and donation processes. The report notes that only a fraction of 1.0 percent of IVF patients experience short-term effects classified as severe.

The workshop examined long-term risks for cancer and future fertility concerns. The available data are reassuring because they do not support a relationship between IVF treatment and breast or ovarian cancer. Experts cautioned, however, that more research is required to assess the possibility that fertility drugs may cause some increased risk of uterine cancer. The report indicates that "presently there is no evidence...that ovarian stimulation may impact a woman's long-term fertility."

Workshop participants emphasized that most of the available research focuses on women providing eggs for IVF, not research, though the stimulation and retrieval process is similar. Hall said, "The report suggest several avenues we may pursue to fund new research to fill identified information gaps and mitigate known risks, particularly in women donating eggs solely for research purposes."

The IOM report is available at <http://www.nas.edu/morenews/20070206.html>.

About CIRM

Governed by the ICOC, CIRM was established in 2004 with the passage of Proposition 71, the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Initiative. The statewide ballot measure, which provided

\$3 billion in funding for stem cell research at California universities and research institutions, was approved by California voters, and called for the establishment of an entity to make grants and provide loans for stem cell research, research facilities, and other vital research opportunities. For more information, please visit www.cirm.ca.gov.